

## Message #71 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

### *"Television - A Conceptual Tool"*

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Well, today I'd like to talk about television. Not just in general, but specifically within the context of what its main purpose is. If you've been listening to our program for very long you are no doubt familiar with our concept of the Image of the Beast, referred to in Revelation 13, as being an image of evilness which is portrayed in today's modern society using the secular programming of television, movies, video games, computers, and a few other more minor devices. These devices are able to create images which Satan uses to influence the thoughts and perspectives of people concerning standards of good and evil.

The concepts of good and evil, righteousness and wickedness, are the basic concepts for which this world has been established. The very basis of Satan's motivation toward power stems from his desire to abolish the standard of God's truth, and thereby establish himself as an alternative power. Satan's plan calls for an assault against God's word in order to destroy the omnipotent power of God, and is intended as a springboard to set himself up in power above the throne of God. For Christians, these concepts should not be anything new. Christians well know that Satan is attempting to exalt himself above the throne of God, and that the warfare between good and evil exists. However, although Christians recognize the existence of the spiritual warfare that is being waged between good and evil, they are not necessarily aware of the methods Satan is using in his quest for power.

The Bible has clearly established that God's word is the truth, and that lies are anything that is contrary to God's word. Lies are the basis for everything Satan does. God stands for truth, he is the truth, and we have power over evil through the truth. It is the lies of Satan which brings us

into the bondage of sin, but it is the clear and unadulterated word of God that gives us freedom from that bondage. The lie is nothing more and nothing less than a twisted form of God's word. The lie takes the truth of God and twists it just a little. The lie is made up mostly of truth with just a little bit of untruth thrown in. Twisted truth is truth that has become crooked. It is no longer the straight and unbending word of God, but has crooks and bends and twists introduced into it. This symbolic concept of the twisted truth gives us the concept of a twisted path which leads to destruction, and is the reverse concept of God's truth, which gives us the concept of truth being the straight and narrow way.

Satan's whole purpose is to pervert the word of God. And, his purpose is to accomplish this perversion to the extent that people will follow the path of his lies just enough until their feet can no longer find solid footing, causing them to fall away from their prime objective of reaching God. Satan knows that in order to exalt himself above the throne of God, the only thing he really has to do is to keep people from coming to God. Any place without God is a place that is with Satan. Satan rules in the absence of God. Therefore, it is of prime importance that all people find their way to God, or they will automatically end up in bondage to the king of evil. The path to heaven is by truth, which is the righteousness of God. The path to hell is by becoming susceptible to Satan's lies, the distorted truth, and therefore a person cannot find God, for the truth has not been revealed to them.

The images which television and movies present are the greatest tool in Satan's arsenal for these end times. The video screens present concepts and viewpoints by displaying images which convey thoughts and ideas to the audience. The television itself is just an electronic box. It is a mechanical device which uses the technological science of this world to present twisted truth. Other forms of devices Satan uses for this purpose are movies, computers, video games, etc. Even photographs and drawings can easily be tools of Satan for the presentation of evil concepts and twisted truths, not to mention a means of temptation. However, these last mentioned items do not include the one essential element which is required in order to categorize the device as being the Image of the Beast described specifically in Revelation 13. In this chapter of Revelation, the Image of the Beast which is invented by the people of earth has a singular qualification which separates it from most forms of photography and drawings. In Revelation 13 we see that the two qualities of this Image are that it is both presented as an image, and also that it speaks. Televisions, movies, computers and video games have this quality of speech.

The image of the Beast is a tool which was not created by Satan directly. Revelation 13 clearly explains that it is the people of the earth who create the image. This image speaks. Television and movies are the main forms of devices which mankind has created in this world which have the quality of speech. Television and movies have graphic images, and they also have the ability to convey the spoken word. Initially, all images of mankind were created without the ability to convey speech. The first moving graphic images which could also speak were called the, "talkies." When the first talking movies came out, people flocked to the movie houses for this new form of entertainment. Of course, the eventual inventions of technology caused this form of

speaking imagery to evolve into our current day forms of television, movies, and computer graphics.

Current science and technology provides images which are portrayed on television, computers, or the big screen of movie theaters which produce speech, and in this final form of electronic and mechanical inventions they are able to convey to the people of this world the ideas and concepts of both good and evil in a manner never before accomplished. In the Garden of Eden, a form of twisted truth was presented to a single human being. It was a lie which was made up mostly of truth, but perverted just enough to cause sin to enter into the woman. Eve was deceived by the lie which Satan, in the form of a serpent, presented to her. Now, Eve was not stupid. Eve was not just a gullible woman who had no sense. I doubt there are many people on earth today who would exhibit a contempt for Eve just because she gave in to the temptation which was presented to her. If we take a look at the portion of scripture which we find in Genesis, chapter 3, we see that Satan twisted the truth just enough to give Eve a different concept from what the perfect truth of God really was. Even though Eve refuted Satan initially, his temptation finally overcame Eve's reluctance by erasing her established convictions of what truth really was. We must realize that it was not Eve's intention to be disobedient to God, and therefore her disobedience had to be coerced from her by eroding her concept of truth. The lie was presented, and Eve was deceived. It is important to realize this, that she was deceived, and not that she was inherently evil and just wanted to be wicked. The Bible is clear in its presentation of the facts of these verses that Eve was deceived with lies, and that the destruction of her understanding of the truth was responsible for weakening her resolve. It is no different for you and me. It is the lie of Satan which erodes our understanding of truth, and through listening to the lie, doubt is introduced into the true word of God.

It only takes a little twisting of the truth in order to change God's truth to a lie. And Satan, in a temporary sense, has been given the right to present lies to the people of earth. However, whenever we allow ourselves to become subject to twisted truth, we are also allowing ourselves to be tempted to choose a path which is in partnership with crookedness. In order to ensure that we remain on the straight and narrow path, we must protect ourselves from lies. Christians understand this, at least to the extent that we realize that lies will destroy us, and that the truth will set us free.

But, a significant problem Christians face is how to protect themselves from such a huge deluge of lies that we are completely overwhelmed by doubt, and end up drowning in Satan's sea of perdition; his sea of destruction. The lies of Satan are represented symbolically in scripture by the raging sea and the impure waters of the earth. When we allow ourselves to become subject to such a great volume of lies that we can no longer keep our heads above the waters of the devil's raging sea, we drown, symbolically, in that sea of lies.

Christians are deceived in this current day and age just as Eve was deceived in the Garden of Eden. They allow themselves to become captive audiences of Satan, and allow him to speak to them. Satan, as the father of liars, is a liar from the beginning. It is his only power, and all his

power stems from this basic principle of lies. In one form or another, all the things that take place in the world of evil take place because Satan's lies are believed. It is through this belief in twisted truth that the people of the world are able to create all the world social system temptations for mankind. Satan is the tempter, and he is the liar, but it is mankind who creates the wicked devices. Satan's part in the creation of wicked devices is only the introduction of twisted truth, and it is the desire of the flesh, the animal nature of man, that spurs mankind into creating one more delicacy of sinfulness. The animal nature, that human nature which has no connection with the spirit nature of God, is the base nature of mankind. And, in order to stimulate this flesh nature, mankind has devised every kind of worldly device imaginable. The temptation to create these devices is from Satan, and it is from the warped sense of truth that mankind is motivated. For it is the desire of the flesh which so strongly moves mankind to create devices which can entertain his fleshly nature, his base animal nature.

The stimulation of man's carnal nature is the same temptation that drove Eve to accept the temptation of Satan. Because she desired the fruit of the tree, and because Satan's lies gave her a possible reason for disobedience to God, she gave in. We are no different. We give in to temptation because we have strong fleshly desires and because we have been lied to. The twisted truth we receive can only be dispelled by the perfect truth of God. But when we subject ourselves to such a great amount of twisted truth as is presented by the speaking images of today's television and movies, we become overwhelmed. And, what I'm about to say is a plain fact that cannot be denied. "You cannot load your mind with mountains of twisted truth and then add just a few verses of scripture a week to your knowledge and then expect to have victory over Satan." Once again I will also repeat the old saying, "Garbage in, garbage out!"

And Satan knows this. His purpose in these last days is to present his lies on a much larger scale than could possibly have been done through individuals speaking publicly in person. Before the invention of images which speak, the lies of Satan still had destructive potential, but the spreading of those lies were contained in some measure because people were spread out on the earth. Ever since the Tower of Babel, when God dispersed the people, Satan has been at a disadvantage. But now, with the removal of that hindrance, Satan is able to spread his concepts to the whole world on a daily basis. People of the world, no matter whether they are rich or poor, free or slave, intelligent or ignorant, watch television. Through this media Satan conveys his message. No, the message is not always blatantly opposed to all aspects of God. But the message is almost always twisted just enough that humans are unable to distinguish between God's perfect truth and the twisted lies of Satan. Satan has ensured that the world standards of dress and speech are presented each and every day in television, movies, and other forms of images which convey speech. And when Christians see social situations which are opposed to the truth of God, they then have to dispel any doubts which arise as to God's perfect truth. In short, they can't. The mountain of lies which has risen up cannot be dispelled, because God's people do not destroy the mountain of lies with a mountain of truth.

In this world, Christianity takes a back seat to worldliness. The churches of today do not stress concepts of righteousness and holiness, but put more emphasis on the aspect of receiving blessings from God. Almost every church's quest for revival is based on wanting to have God's

blessings poured out on the congregation. They don't think about the concept of revival being a reviving from spiritual unconsciousness or spiritual death, but think that revival means having services where you jump and shout. But jumping and shouting should be because of what God has already done for you, not in trying to bring down the blessings of God from heaven. But then, that's another subject. However, I will say this. It is the rare church that attempts to reach a state of revival by fervently applying the word of God to their lives. Revival is when a person is revived to life who had been spiritually dead or in a spiritually comatose state. Oh that the church would realize this and begin to serve God with singleness of purpose rather than looking for outward blessings.

But, back to our subject. Television and movies must be recognized as devices which convey twisted concepts of truth. When God's word describes evilness, and Christians watch other people on television who act in opposition to the truth of God, then these Christians are condoning those acts of disobedience. If you set in front of your TV and laugh at lewdness, or if you find entertainment by watching others waste their time with vain sports or hobbies, then you are also partaking in their wasting of the time. God has not called his people to waste their time with things of this world which are just fleshly entertainments. One of Satan's main purposes of the images that speak are to create couch potato Christians. And when you praise the physical accomplishments of man, you are focusing your attention on things of this world and not on the things of God. Psalms 147:10 tells us that God does not delight in the strength of the horse or in the legs of a man. Is it any wonder that Satan has caused such great emphasis to be placed on sports in this world? Remember what I said earlier. Satan doesn't have to get you to a specific location by his temptation. He only needs to keep you from God's presence. Satan reigns in any place which is outside of the presence of God. And any place outside of the presence of God is equivalent to hell. This is described quite plainly in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 which says, "And to you who are troubled, rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and that do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

The extreme danger of television, movies, and other forms of graphical images that produce speech is not recognized by most of today's Christians. Of course, Christians generally recognize that there is an extensive amount of evil portrayed on the television, the computer, and in movies and video games, but most of these Christians are convinced that they are using the various devices in an appropriate manner. Yet, they do not realize the extensive amount of twisted truth that permeates their ears. Almost any commercial on the television is packed with deception, and even the evening news is aimed at establishing social standards which are in opposition to scripture. How a person dresses, how a person uses hair or facial styles, how a person views parental responsibility, or any of a multitude of other concepts, are established by the subtlety of secular programming. No, there is no way to strictly divide that which is appropriate from that which is inappropriate concerning the secular programming on television, computers, or in movies or video games. However, a simple example may be helpful.

Recently I overheard a conversation in which a non-Christian mother of two children was talking about taking her kids to see the movie about the Narnia series, entitled, “The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe.” Of course, many people consider this movie to be Christian in concept. However, in hearing the mother of two children discussing the movie, I heard her saying that the movie was absolutely wonderful, and she wanted to see it again. She thought it was one of the best movies she ever saw. She was absolutely excited about it. Then she said something very interesting. She added that she had heard that the movie had something to do with Jesus Christ, but that she didn't think so, she couldn't see any connection with the movie and Jesus, but she certainly did love the movie.

Now, interestingly enough, the movie deals with mythology, and includes the concept of witchcraft. Notice that the concepts in the movie which were supposed to be representative of Jesus Christ and the concept of salvation were completely lost to the non-Christian mother. Now, the woman is an intelligent person. No doubt about it. Yet, she could not see any Jesus connection at all. So, in your opinion, what did the movie do for that woman and her children?

The Bible clearly tells us that we are to have nothing to do with witchcraft, but many Christians believe that a playful imitation of witchcraft is harmless. Some Christians allow their children to play games or read novels which include concepts of witchcraft, while suggesting that they are not really involved in witchcraft, but only playing a game. But this viewpoint is flawed in the sense that evil stems from the spirit of evil, and not just from the act itself. The spirit of evil is still present in the act of playing with it, just as it is in the actual working at it. And, for just one more example to press this point, consider what God's response would be if you allowed your child to play with a statue of Baal, and to pretend to make sacrifices to it. Many people may claim that God is not offended when they play with witchcraft as a game, but it is the same concept of playing with idol worship as a game. Whether it is a game or serious business, the spirit of evil is spreading the lies of Satan. No, your children may not be seriously into witchcraft yet, but you are allowing them to be instructed in the principles of it, and to be deceived concerning the danger of it.

The concept of Christians coming out of the world and being separate has largely been replaced by a doctrine which encourages humans to do their own thing, and to interpret scripture according to current world standards instead of Bible standards. Television and movies, the secular programming of graphical images which speak, are responsible for setting these kind of standards. Most Christians have accepted these standards, and they cannot comprehend what it means to accept the Bible completely. Certainly, we are in the last days, just as in the days of Noah. The wickedness is great, and Christians do not realize the deception that is present.